BRISTOL PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 18, , 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

Reported from video recording of the meeting by John Moyers.

Planning Commission Members Present: [in person and by remote]: Melissa Hernandez, Kevin Hanson, John Moyers, Slim Pickens, Rob Rooker, Bill Sayre ???

Visitors: Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) Executive Director Adam Lougee, ???

Others Present: Zoning Administrator Kris Perlee. ???

Call to Order: Kris Perlee called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm EDT.

Agenda Item I. is election of officers.

Kris presides, calls for election of officers:

Chair: Rob Rooker nominated Kevin Hanson for chair.
Second by Melissa.
Kevin elected unanimously.

Vice Chair: ?? nominated Rob Rooker.
Rob elected unanimously.

Kevin presides as chair.

II. Review agenda for additions, removal, or adjustment of any items per …

No changes.
Kevin acknowledges that the PC has an open seat.

III. Continuing Business:

a. Discussion: Continue By-Law Modernization Grant Work with ACRPC with Adam Lougee.

Last time we looked at HDR district dimensional standards, and decided to look at residential density, residential lot size, and residential lot frontage. Using a one-block map as representative of village density.

This time looking at larger sample — the entire village. Showing lots that do and don't conform to current regs on frontage (75'). There are 441 lots in Town of Bristol. Non-compliant on frontage in HDR, 71 lots don't comply.

Kris: [digression back to Melissa's question about number of residences in Bristol] based on water distirct meters, there are 635 meters, so about 600 residences, and about 1600 total residences in Bristol.

Hernandez says we might wait for revisions to Bristol regs until S.100 final status and impact is understood.

Rob Rooker: reluctant to narrow frontage, wastewater concerns, decent neighborhood qualities, not just row houses with a driveway in between.

Slim Pickens: Lot of unknowns coming from the State. Would rather go slower. Hesitant to reduce frontages.

Hernandez: What is status of S.100.

Adam: We'll know in a month, says it may not impact most of the village of Bristol.

Kevin Hanson: Deal with things as they exist and take account of S.100 when it's final.

Back to discussion of frontage reduction.

Sayre: reluctant to reduce frontage regs. Septic. Wells. Likes idea of having more backyard/ frontyard space among neighbors.

Moyers: Shifting regs down to bring in non-conforming lots is not a good reason to do it. Those parcel owners have recourse if they want to develop — they can have a review. On-site septic concern.

Hanson notes consensus for staying with 75' frontages.

Adam moves on to analysis 10,000 and 4 dwelling units per acre lot coverage standard in current regs.

Number of parcels not compliant with lot size: 55 of 441. Clustered around the small size, 7200-36,000 square feet.

He suggests we look at reduction to 8,000 sf.

He removed small/large outliers from analysis to show most lost sizes clustered btwn 10,000 and 20,00 sf.

Adam emphasizes bringing in non-conforming lots by reducing lot coverage.

Hanson expresses concern for lot depths.

Discussion of building lots available in village. Adam says most non-conforming lots have buildings on them, but for one or two.

Sayre: Would like an idea of how many more units per lot are allowed under current regs versus if we reduce lot coverage. Not ruling out small lots, but it'll be connected to his concern.

Adam: He wants to discuss more density, multi-family etc. in future meetings.

Hernandez: How many more properties will be able to divide their lot?

Adam: There are some 20,000 sf parcels that could be subdivided. It would increase possibility for subdivisions for larger lots.

Pickens: Hard to visualize lot size. How big is Hanson's home lot [visible on map]? ~20,000 sf. Hesitant to reduce lot size.

Rooker: Hesitant to go to smaller lot size from 10,00 because of infrastructure concerns and interior lot access.

Hanson: Uncertain of math for how many units can be put on 10,000 sf lot at 4 units per acre. Do you have to have 20,000 sf to put a duplex on that? Hung up a little bit on duplexes requiring 20,000 sf lot.

Adam: Happy to move on given sense of board.

Discussion of subdivided lot sizes for duplex or higher density… Can a 10,000 sf lot be developed?

Adam: Should we talk about duplexes? Current regs allow 4 dwelling units per acre. On a 1-acre lot, you could do 4 single-family homes, 2 duplexes, or one 4-unit multi-family on that acre. Should that be a sliding scale to encourage more unit density? Should you be able to put 2 or 4 duplexes there? Should residential density per unit be the same for 1-family, 2-family, or 3-family or more, or should you allow more density?

Hanson: Thinking about HDR, we have a lot of lots that are already formed. The issue of developing a one-acre open lot may not be as real as someone converting existing single-family to a duplex.

Kris Perlee: I get that question a lot. They want to convert existing house.

Hernandez: How big can a duplex be?

Adam: 5,000 sf

Hernandez: Could you have a sliding scale of how large a duplex it allowed?

Adam: There is a lot-coverage ratio…

Shows map of Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADus), Duplex and Multi-family… Three are about 40 now, or one-tenth of lots…

Hernandez: Would like more duplexes.

Pickens: Using 1-acre example, there could be 4 homes on one acre, and then each of them could have an ADU. Duplexes might be worth of density bonus.

Perlee: Homes need to owner-occupied for an ADU.

Rooker: Density bonus is a slippery slope. Implications for parking, frontages etc and what will change, instead of planned development. What does density bonus look like for existing vs proposed structure?

Perlee: Hinesburg density bonus regulation is 10 pages, others towns have one paragraph.

Moyers: I want to support density, it's coming whether we want it or not. Feel we need to find ways to make more density fit in (light, noise, parking etc), but we can only do so under S.100 if we we're willing to require site plan review for existing homes, too.

Hanson: Looks at existing fabric of village, not so much how to develop an acre… My goal to make zoning mirror what the village is like… People got it right the first time and we're preoccupied with screwing it up… I'm looking toward the fabric of the village as opposed to thinking of it as a wide-open spot… Try to match what we have as a fabric.

Perlee: Parking issues… not a huge issue in the village.

Hanson: Recap… We're open to some sort of density or incentive to a duplex, but there are concerns for the impact of doing that.

Rooker: With a 50% bonus for square footage or four per acre, 1that's 16,000 or 16,500… Does density bonus default onto multi-family?

Adam: Next place I go is multi-family… could say multi-family less than X… duplex decision does not necessarily impact your decision on multi-families.

Hernandez: we should have some discussion about ordinances that we may need as we increase density, and may need already, such as the lighting… Wants to set aside time for discussion of that.

Adam: You can't do it in your zoning but could do it as a separate ordinance… that would be up to you.

Perlee: Selectboard deals with ordinances.

Moyers: endorses ordinances… S.100 would allow us to review for parking…

Adam: Do you want a sliding-scale density bonus for multi-family homes? Is there a unit limit on multi-family homes to apply the bonus to? Multi-family is building with three or more units… could be divided existing home or newly build multi-family apartment on it… Should you be able to take a large older home and convert to duplex or multi-family? Could limit number of units…

Rooker: If we apply to duplex, it should go to multi-family but there should be limit to multi-family, too…

Pickens: Agree with Rob…

Perlee: Firehouse development a good example of multi-family… but needed almost an acre for wastewater, so that's a limiting issue.

Sayre: Inclined to limit density bonus to duplexes.

Moyers: Agree with others — need to think more on density bonus… thinking about parts of Village Planning Area outside current village… that area is prime for duplex and multi-family.

Hanson: Initial thought not to be too liberal on multi-family… open to overall discussion on it, though.

Adam: Summarizing discussion… Some support for bonus, but not overwhelming chorus… Maybe table HDR and move on the other zones, MIX etc… Can provide links for general info on density..

Adam concludes.

Moyers excuses himself from meeting.

Item IIII. This is our organizational meeting so we can change or modify policies or proceedures.

Hanson: sent to PC a draft of protocols for conduct, how we deal with each other… Not sure if we want to formalize the, but think we should be mindful of them. Do we need to formalized this or not? … Last bullet is currently in policies and procedures… moved from existing into this draft… This is our organizational meeting.

Perlee: You would need a motion to discuss.

Rooker: moves to "discuss possible addition."

Seconded by Hernandez.

Rooker: Has some concerns for a couple of things, didn't mark it up.

Pickens: These appear to aspirational and not something to be codified… This would just be an aspiration for me.

Sayre: They are reasonable guidelines, aspirational, but don't think we want to interpret them strictly in ways that defeat their own purpose…

Hernandez: These as guidelines is a good thing, not set-in-stone rules… suggests edits…

Hanson: Hearing that this would be a guiding document, not part of policies and procedures, and if so, we should vote no… Calls vote "on adopting this":

Policy not adopted.

Perlee: Do you want some sort of motion just to solidify this document as an acknowledgement? There's some really powerful stuff here and I don't want it lost…

Rooker: if it's going to be an official document we should polish it.

Hernandez agrees to take a pass at revising it.

Hanson: reminds PC to review Town of Bristol conflict of interest policy.

Hanson: Reports on effort by Middlebury College to update wildlife corridor maps… he agreed to consult with them… could be useful for future town planning.

Item V. Administrative matters.

Discussion of minutes for April 4, 2023 meeting.

Hanson: Line 45, proposes clarifying 40’ setback… Line 74-75: proposes clarification of citation of statute… Line 75: clarifies re: review for one- and two-family dwellings.

Rooker: Moves to approve minutes as corrected.

Minutes approved unanimously.

VI. Zoning Administrator’s Report

Phone ringing off the hook.

VII. Chair’s Report.

VIII. Public comment. None.

Meeting adjourned 9:04pm EDT.